

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application.

Claims 8–15 and 19–32 are pending. Claims 8–10, 12–14 and 19–32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murasaki (EP 0 580 073 A2) in view of Menzin (US 3,758,657). Claims 11 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murasaki in view of Menzin and in further view of Reil (US 4,196,035). Without acceding to the rejection under § 103, dependent Claim 9 has been amended to more clearly recite certain features of the claimed molding/demolding strips. Applicant respectfully traverses the remaining rejections.

Claim 8 is directed to an apparatus for producing plastic panels, and recites, *inter alia*, at least one mold provided in at least one molding/demolding strip, the molding/demolding strip having a first non-raised position and a second raised position, wherein the molding/demolding strip is capable of assuming said second position to nondestructively release the at least one undercut attachment of the plastic panel after the at least one undercut attachment has left the at least one roll nip. Claims 19 and 32 are directed to an apparatus for the production of individual plastic panels and recite similar subject matter. Applicant submits that none of the cited references, taken either singly or in combination, teaches or suggests these features.

Murasaki is directed to a method for manufacturing a continuous length of molded surface fastener having coupling elements, e.g., hooks, on one side and a backing material on the other. Murasaki discloses that molten resin, extruded from extrusion nozzle 1, is forced into the gap between die wheel 2 and lower arched surface 1b. The outer surface of die wheel 2 includes hook molding cavities 5, which fill up with molten resin to form hooks 4b on base layer 4a. Heated backing material 3 is pressed against base layer 4a by rear pressure roller 8a, and, as the molten resin begins to cool, the resin begins to solidify and bond with backing material 3. Before the resin has completely solidified, Murasaki teaches that hooks 4b undergo temporary deformation as they are forcibly “tugged” out of hook molding cavities 5. *See, e.g.,* Col. 7, lines 15–17; Col. 7, line 55 to Col. 8, line 36; FIGS. 1–3. Applicant submits that Murasaki fails to teach or suggest the aforementioned features recited by Claims 8, 19 and 32. The Examiner apparently agrees.¹

¹ Office Action at Page 3, Lines 11–12.

However, the Examiner opines that Menzin provides the subject matter missing from Murasaki.² Applicant disagrees.

Menzin is directed to an apparatus that produces a continuous plastic strip 44 having hooks 21 projecting from one surface. Menzin discloses that mold wheel 26 includes a circular disk 27 having groups of alternating mold plates 29 and spacer plates 30. Mold plates 29 are immovably mounted to disk 27 and have mold cavities 33 on their opposite sides to form hook-like projections 21. Menzin teaches that spacer plates 30, which have no mold cavities, move inwardly, in a radial direction, to allow hooks 21 to disengage from cavities 33 of mold plates 29 after plastic material has been injected. *See, e.g.,* Col. 3, lines 42–62; Col. 4, lines 9–13; Col. 5, lines 36–53; FIGS. 7, 8, 10–12. Applicant submits that Menzin fails to disclose a mold provided in at least one molding/demolding strip having a first non-raised position and a second raised position, as recited by Claims 8, 19 and 32. Instead, Menzin teaches that his mold cavities 33 are provided in fixed mold plates 29 and not in movable spacer plates 30. Consequently, Menzin fails to provide the subject matter missing from Murasaki. Moreover, none of the remaining references, taken either singly or in combination, teaches or suggests the aforementioned features recited by Claims 8, 19 and 32.

Accordingly, Claims 8, 19 and 32 are allowable. Furthermore, Claims 9–15, 20–28, 30 and 31, depending from Claim 8, and Claim 29, depending from Claim 19, are also allowable, at least for the reasons discussed above.

² Office Action at Page 3, lines 14–18.

CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance and should now be passed to issue.

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been requested separately, such extension is hereby requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees and to credit any overpayments that may be required by this paper under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 02-2135.

Respectfully submitted,

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